

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, December 14. 1695.

Quest. 1.

I Desire you would give your opinion of a Book intitled; The fulfilling of the Scriptures, held forth in a Discovery, &c. Also toward the End, it is said to contain a few rare Histories of the work and servants of God in the Church of Scotland; all which is in the Title page. 'Tis also said that one Mr. Flimming was the Author of this, I was a going to say, incredible Book, but from page 335 to the Appendix in p. 414, in which are many of these stories, one or two of which I could not forbear troubling you with lest you should miss of the Book, whereof the owner says, there are but very few in England, tho I am afraid there are too many by all that ever was Printed, Notwithstanding the owner of it says 'tis as true, meaning every word of the Book, as that God's in Heaven, which I desire you would not forget to answer; as also what the Author says, about the Holy Man, Mr. Welsh, and so on, and whether this be not an improper Title for his Book. Your Impartial answer will not only end a great Controversy, but also settle the mind of, yours to serve you, &c.

The Stories follow, Transcrib'd out of the inclos'd leaf. p. 339, and 40. where the Author says thus. 'I shall add some few Histories, which are worthy of a Remark in our own Land, how visibly the Lord did pursue by his Judgment, some who had deserted the Truth, and turn'd opposers and persecutors thereof, in their Promoting Antichristian Prelacy, contrary to their former Profession and Engagement.

'I shall instance Mr. Patrick Adamson, a Preacher once of great Repute in this Land, but one whom Ambition and Private Interest sway'd more than the Interest of Christ, who insinuating himself in the Kings favour made it his work to overturn the establish'd Government and Discipline of the Church, until he got himself settled Arch-Bishop of St. Andrews, and Prelacy by his means advanced: Yea, in the height of his Power and Grandour turn'd an avowed persecutor of his Brethren, &c. But a little after, as was then most known, he was by the righteous Judgment of God brought to that pass, that his parts did so far wither and dry up, that in seeking a Blessing on his Meat, he could scarce speak few words to sense, tho once admir'd for his Eloquence; as for his Riches, he was forc'd to get Charity from those Ministers whom he before persecuted, &c. And thus in great Misery he dy'd, cast off by the World whose favour he had only sought: His publick Acknowledgment of his Guilt and Apostacy, and of the Lords hand pursuing the same, was by himself subscrib'd before Divers eminent and worthy Ministers of the Church, who did also by their Subscriptions attest the same, which was afterwards Printed.

'It is also evident how the Lord in his Judgment did pursue that wretched Man, his Successor, Bishop Spotwood, who in a more subtil way did endeavour the overturning the Discipline and Liberties of the Church, for setting up of Prelacy, and by underhand dealing got himself first thrust into Glasgow, and afterwards to be Arch-Bishop of St. Andrews, yea at last was Chancellor of Scotland, his eldest Son a Baron in Fife, and his second Son President of the Session, his Daughter also marry'd to Rosline, then a considerable Baron. But let us see whether this ends, what an eminent Example in all these respects of the Judgment of God he was, and therein the prophecy of that great man, Mr. Welsh, accomplish'd, who did foretel in a Letter while he was Prisoner at Blackness, that he should be as a Stone cast out of a sling by the hand of God, his name should rot, and a Malediction on his posterity: And truly this is known what became of himself in the year 1638. How he was Excommunicated by the Church, did flee into England, where in great Misery he dy'd; his eldest son was brought to beg his Bread: His second son being tak-

en at the Battle of Philip-Hauch, was beheaded at St. Andrews, and his younger at Edenborough, and for his Daughter who was marry'd to Rosline, it's known how quickly after that Estate was rooted out.

Ans. There's enough of 'em, and more then enough, if one half on't were true, as here represented, to make people believe that the Gude Kith-men in Scotland were as certainly inspir'd as the Seventy Elders, and that wicked Prelacy ought, like the Amalekites, to be utterly destroy'd.

We must confess we have not the Book by us, only that Leaf whereof we have here transcrib'd the greater part: Nor are we so well acquainted with the Histories of Scotland as we would wish to be, in order to give a more full satisfaction; yet do not much fear but we shall be able to advance sufficient in general on the matters in question, to satisfy the honest Man who proposes them to us, or any other who are not too far prejudic'd already. Tho for the zealous owner of this intailable Book, every word of which he says, is as true as God's in Heaven, we don't expect to convince him by any thing we shall say, since we doubt not he thinks it all Gospel; only we must entreat him to consider that there are other people besides the Papists, who may be given over to believe in Lies: For the Title of the Book. 'The fulfilling of the Scriptures, we don't think 'tis so improper as the querist believes, for the Scripture, nay, Christ himself has told us, 'many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. and there shall come false Christs, and false Prophets, and whether these Scriptures are not accomplish'd where persons pretend to the Spirit of Prophecy and immediate Inspiration, in order to revile Dignities and Blaspheme Dominions, let those consider who have those very persons so highly in admiration! As to the stories themselves; We say, first, that those who publish and believe 'em will not stand the Tryal of their Doctrine by the same way of Argument, such or such a Man was unhappy, he or his came to poverty, or untimely ends, such Regicides were hang'd, such a Major was executed for Witchcraft and Murder (they know well enough whom we mean) such and such Kirk-Ministers were found among the slain in Dunbar-Fight (the very Argument that Cromwell used against their cause in his Letters after that Fight, giving a Relation of it here in England) such were taken at Bothwell-Briggs, or with Argyle and so on, therefore all these were certainly Judgments of God upon them as wicked pretenders to Religion, and Hypocritical disturbers of the establish'd Government in Church and State, not worse than Antichristian Prelates, and the rest which they so liberally give Again, We own nothing is more unfair than to charge the Faults and Errors of every particular Man, supposing 'em both real and very great, on a whole Community, but 'tis highly wicked to Reproach good Men, and their cause with those Misfortunes which have been brought upon 'em for their Firmness to the Truth by the Violence and Injustice of those very persons who Reproach them. For then the Martyrs would be justly accus'd by their Persecutors as the off-scouring of the World, and there's a certain Nation which are thought by some to have sent Colons a great way from their first seats, who to this day give our Saviour himself no better a Title than Him that was hang'd or crucify'd. The sum is, that Success, Providence, Judgments and the like, as they are used by turns of one party against another, are for the most part perfectly equivocal and unconcluding Arguments, separating from the merits of the cause, since no man can (certainly) know either Love or hatred by

by the things that are set before him, and our Saviour has given us sufficient caution against such rash censures, or concluding one man a greater Sinner than another, because he meets with a larger share of misfortunes, and 'tis therefore far enough from an Argument for the Truth, or Righteousness of any cause, to insist most on such Popular and Equivocal Arguments: This in general. In particular, we must again confess we are not so well acquainted with the History of our angry Brethren, and Fellow-Islanders, as to know the Characters of all the particular persons that have made any Figure in their Nation, and therefore must argue at present for the most part, from those hints which this writer himself gives us. And first, for Arch-Bishop *Adamson*, he might, for ought we know, be a person of as much worth as we are sure his Successor *Spotwood* was. Notwithstanding the Blackmouth'd Scandals and Clamours of his Enemies. This we are sure, that from what they here advance against him, nothing can with any firmness be concluded to the contrary: He oppos'd the Discipline; so would *Cranmer* had he been living, so did *Whigfi*, *Usher*, &c. But he fell from his Riches, and was forc'd to receive relief from the Ministers; and was not that most Learned, and most Reverend person last mention'd; the Holy Arch-Bishop *Usher* reduc'd exactly to the same Condition, and yet, we hope, never the worse man? Yet further, his parts, they say, wither'd to that degree, that in seeking a Blessing, to his meat, he could scarce speak a few sensible words. We won't say that if not speaking sense in a few words, as he was asking a Blessing were a Judgment on the Arch-Bishop, it may be as well turn'd upon some who possibly may speak more Nonsense in a great many words on the same occasion. But we may justly tell 'em of the famous *Ward*, and many other great and good men, who by too intense studies and a long course of Labours, may, in a natural way, have been reduc'd to the same Condition: Tho' after Arch-Bishop *Adamson* was once brought to it, and his senses so notoriously fail'd him, we no longer wonder that he subscrib'd to any thing that shou'd be set before him; but think it a greater wonder that this Author, whom some of his party, it seems, hardly think less than inspir'd, shou'd commit so foul a Blunder, as to insert both of those passages; his loss of his Senses, and his Recantation, wherein, besides, he only loses Ink and Paper, since one of 'em might easily have been infer'd from the other.

As for his second instance, that of Arch-Bishop *Spotwood*, of whom he says, that *Wolfe* Mr. *Welsh* did Prophecy in a Letter, that his Family shou'd be unfortunate, and his name shou'd rot, &c. For those unpardonable sins of opposing the Discipline and Establishing Prelacy, we must first of all remind the Authors Friends of some Oracles and Prophecies, which they know have been given out by another Spirit, than they think they are of, which he for his own Honour has afterwards done all he cou'd to make good, and has had the greatest hand in doing it: We shall further, from, we hope, a more sure word of Prophecy than Mr. *Welshes*, prove him a False Prophet, which the Scripture it self says, he certainly is, 'who Speaks in the name of the Lord, and his word comes not to pass. But so did *Welsh*, and yet the Event has sufficiently confuted him in that great and Remarkable instance. That *Spotwood's* name shou'd rot, whereas 'tis still as sweet ointment, venerable and precious with good men, nay, we dare believe he has not that ill Character, which is here given, even among the best and wisest of those who are of another opinion from him as to Episcopacy, unless they are downright Cameronians, nor will they we hope, accuse him of any Renouncing Episcopacy, whilst his last will and Testament so clearly shews his solemn avow'd approbation thereof. However, 'twou'd tempt a grave man to smile, when among the fulfilling the Prophecies against this Arch-Prelate, he instances in his Excommunication by the

Kirk, and Banishment from Scotland into England, the latter of which he may easily persuade an English man, was much such a Judgment in his temporal Estate, as the former was in his spiritual. Indeed 'tis pity such a work as this shou'd not go on; wherein we might hope for a continuation of these Remarkable Judgments, in the Instances of King *Charles the first*, *Montross*, and the Arch-Bishop of *St. Andrews*; but perhaps these are reserv'd for a second Appendix, which may be finish'd as soon as we see what will become of those, who have lately been so hardy to restore so many prelatical Ministers to their People and Livings. If any person shou'd by the wicked uncharitableness and barbarous Indignities which they have found in Books of this or the like nature, offer'd to the Ashes of Good men, be tempted to call for Fire from Heaven, as well as their opposers, we earnestly desire 'em to be of another mind, and reduce themselves to a better temper, to impute these things, at least in the Vulgar, to an almost involuntary Ignorance and Remoteness from the world, and to follow the Example of our great Bishop, who pray'd even for his own Murderers, some of his last words being only, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!

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